

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7952

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 3105

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MR ZIMMERMAN AND MISS BRAZHEL

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SHUM, PA

SUBJ: HUMAN RIGHTS

REF: BRIGGS-BRAZEAL TELECON JULY 27, 1976

1. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, DURING THE RECENT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEBATES ON AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION TO PERMIT PRESIDENT STROESSNER TO SUCCEED HIMSELF, OPPOSITION SPOKESMEN TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITY FOR FREE DEBATE TO CRITICIZE THE GOP FOR ITS POOR RECORD ON HUMAN RIGHTS. KEY LOCAL PRESS ACCOUNTS OF SPEECHES MADE DURING THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY HAVE BEEN TRANSLATED BY FBIS AND COPIES OF FBIS TRANSCRIPTS POUCHED BY EMBASSY TO PARAGUAYAN DESK OFFICER.

2. THE ONLY NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SPEECH WHICH DEALT IN ANY LENGTH WITH THE SUBJECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS WAS DELIVERED ON JULY 16 BY CARMEN LARA CASTRO, OPPOSITION RADICAL LIBERAL PARTY DEPUTY AND HEAD OF PARAGUAY'S HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION. THE COMPLETE TEXT OF MRS. CASTRO'S REMARKS WAS NOT REPORTED IN DAILY PRESS BUT DID APPEAR IN THE JULY 26 ISSUE OF THE OPPOSITION PARTY WEEKLY "EL RADICAL." FBIS IS IN THE PROCESS OF TRANSMITTING THE COMPLETE TRANSLATION. FOLLOWING ARE SOME OF HIGHLIGHTS OF HER REMARKS:
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A. "FOR 20 YEARS ALL THE POLITICAL PRISONERS HAVE

BEEN ACCUSED OF WANTING TO ASSASSINATE THE PRESIDENT...
PEASANTS ARE PUNISHED WITH BEATINGS AND CRUEL TORTURE
BEFORE IT IS KNOWN WHETHER THEY ARE GUILTY OR NOT...
MOTHERS SEARCH EAGERLY FOR THEIR SONS WHO HAVE DISAPPEARED,
AT GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS, AT POLICE STATIONS...LET THE
GUILTY BE TRIED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LEGITIMATE RIGHTS
OF DEFENSE AS GUARANTEED BY LAW, GIVING THEM THE SAME
CONSIDERATION AS WAS GIVEN RICORD AND THE ASSASSIN OF THE
UGURUGUAYAN AMBASSADOR."

B. "I HAVE IN MY HANDS THE NAMES OF 200 PRISONERS, NAMES
GIVEN TO ME BY DESPERATE RELATIVES...THERE MAY BE A GREAT
MANY MORE, THIS IS NOT FROM AN OFFICIAL SOURCE. WITHOUT
FEAR OF CONTRADICTION WE CAN SAY THAT NEVER HAVE HUMAN
RIGHTS BEEN SO BARBAROUSLY VIOLATED AS THEY HAVE IN PARAGUAY
OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS. NEVER HAVE THERE BEEN SO MANY
PRISONERS HELD SO LONG, TORTURED SO MUCH, IN THEIR FLESH
AND THEIR SPIRIT...TORTURED TO DEATH IN OUR JAILS. NOT
BEING ABLE TO CONFESS THEIR GUILT BECAUSE THEY WERE INNOCENT,
THEY MET DEATH. I HAVE SEEN THEIR LACERATED BODIES
WITH MY OWN EYES."

3. RE ASUNCION 3550, AUGUST 26, 1974, EMBASSY BELIEVES INFO IN
PARAGRAPH
ONE IS GENERAL KNOWLEDGE. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT ISSUE OF
"COMMENTARY" MAGAZINE (C. 1963--ISSUE NOT AVAILABLE HERE)
CONTAINED CHASE'S OWN ACCOUNT OF HIS BREAK WITH PCP. FOR MORE
PRECISE "PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE" BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON CHASE,
DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO CONSULT WASHINGTON BIOGRAPHIC RECORDS.

4. RE PARAGRAPH 3 REFTTEL, PROJECT MARANDU CAN STILL BE DESCRIBED
AS POLITICALLY SENSITIVE SO LONG AS TWO OF ITS STAFF MEMBERS REMAIN
IN DETENTION, SUSPECTED OF SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES. THE EVENTS OF
THE PAST FEW MONTHS, HOWEVER, INCLUDING THE VISIT OF IAF PRESIDENT
DYAL AND THE RELEASE OF CHASE, HAVE HELPED TO CLEAR THE AIR AND
THE GOP NOW DECLARES ITSELF TO BE FAVORABLY DISPOSED TOWARDS
THE PROJECT. AS TO THE REST IN PARAGRAPH 3, EMBASSY DEFERS
TO DEPARTMENT'S JUDGMENT ON WHAT IF ANY PUBLIC USE TO MAKE OF
ASUNCION 3550.
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